The Dewan opened the proceedings of the Assembly with the following

ADDRESS:—

Gentlemen,

Under command of His Highness the Maha Rajah it is my privilege to welcome you to the second meeting of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly. Last year you appeared as the members nominated by the Government. This year you come as the accredited representatives of the people. The privilege of election which has been granted to the people at such an early stage of the career of the Assembly you owe to the enlightened generosity of His Highness. I trust that this signal mark of confidence will make you only the more solicitous to maintain the character for good sense and moderation which you have already earned both within the State and outside it. The excellent manner in which you acquitted yourselves last year, although unaccustomed to such assemblies, augurs well for the future stability of the institution, and if the same spirit animates your representations and discussions in the coming years the permanent usefulness of this Assembly is assured. I have noted with pleasure that the elections throughout the State were conducted with much enthusiasm and public spirit and that on the whole the members elected are fairly representative of the different sections of the community over whom His Highness holds sway.

I will now proceed to place before you a short account of the administration during the past year.

2. **Land Revenue.**—The season was generally unfavourable for agriculture in the Padmanabhapuram, Trivandrum and Quilon Divisions where there was a rise in the prices of food-grains. In the Kottayam Division the season was better and there was no appreciable variation in the prices. The wages of labour remained almost stationary.

In my address last year, I referred to the peculiar features of the Land Revenue system in the State. Until the Settlement operations now in progress are completed, it would not be possible to place the revenue administration on a sound and efficient basis. The Revenue Code Bill has, as you are aware, been introduced into the Legislative Council by Mr. Rajaram Row and the several important questions which it seeks to solve will be thoroughly discussed and the representations which have been already made as well as those that may be made hereafter will be duly considered before the measure is adopted.

The current demand for the year was Rs. 23,76,398, of which Rs. 22,57,636 or 95 per cent was recovered. Under arrears the demand amounted to Rs. 1,94,142 and the recoveries to Rs. 41,684 or 21 per cent. A sum of Rs. 1,63,986 was due as liabilities and outstandings, of which Rs. 32,383 or 20 per cent was collected. With regard to the low results attained under the last two heads, it may be observed that they are attributable partly to the defects in the system and the absence of reliable accounts.

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It was remarked in the last Administration Report that the correctness of the average assessment which was given as Rs. 2-7-2 per acre of wet land was open to doubt. From statistics collected in regard to six of the settled taluks it is observed that the average per acre of Pandarapattom or Sirkar lands varies from Rs. 21–as. 2 in Tovala and Rs. 19–as. 9 in Agastisvaram to Rs. 3–as. 12 in Nedumangad and Rs. 3–as. 10 in Kartigapally. The average for all the six taluks taken together is Rs. 8–as. 8 per acre. It will thus be seen that the incidence of taxation in Travancore is not so light as is generally believed to be the case. These figures relate only to the six settled taluks for which the information is available and a correct average can be obtained only when the whole State is settled.

The aggregate receipts under Land Revenue amounted to Rs. 22,99,320 and the expenditure to Rs. 7,16,113 against Rs. 23,88,994 and Rs. 6,51,602 respectively in 1079.

Of the 30,684 puduval cases, 11,165 cases or 36 per cent were disposed of, while the disposals under escheat and other revenue cases numbered 757 out of 2,547 or 29 per cent. There were 1,855 and 578 cases under the Poramboke and Land Acquisition Regulations of which 1,763 and 474 or 95 and 82 per cent respectively were disposed of. Out of 21,623 cases of transfer of registry, 15,797 cases or 73 per cent were disposed of.

145 appeals from the decisions of the Peishkars in revenue cases were heard and disposed of by the Dewan during the year, 5 of them having been remanded for further enquiry.

In view of the failure of crops on account of the drought which prevailed the ryots of some of the taluks were permitted, as a measure of relief, to pay the paddy portion of the tax at the favourable rate of 10 chs. per parah.

The question of converting the grain tax on wet lands into money tax which was brought forward at the last meeting of this Assembly has undergone considerable discussion during the year and every effort is being made to arrive at a satisfactory solution as early as circumstances would permit.

3. **Survey.**—The boundary demarcation and survey of Kondur Proverty in Meenachil Taluk, an area of 127 square miles, was done during the year, thus completing the process of cadastral survey of all the 31 taluks of the State. The field survey of all the 31 taluks but one village has also been completed. Village maps of Muvattupula and Todupula were lithographed.

Survey School.—65 Government employés and 132 private students passed out of the Survey School during the year. The school is doing useful work in supplying trained men for work in the Land Revenue Department.

4. **Revenue Settlement.**—Last year I gave you the outlines of the new scheme that had been sanctioned by His Highness for bringing settlement operations which had been unnecessarily protracted and had cost the State an enormous amount of money to a speedy and satisfactory close. You will be gratified to hear that the anticipations formed last year have to a very great extent been realized. The experience gained during the past year has brought to light many irregularities of procedure and heavy arrears of work during the preliminary stages which had not been taken into account when the forecast was framed in September 1904. But these will be considered when a revised forecast now under preparation is adopted. It is believed that, on the

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